

44-112

MAN

IN THE POETIC MODE

3



MAN

MAN IN THE FICTIONAL MODE Books 1-6

MAN IN THE DRAMATIC MODE Books 1-6

MAN IN THE POETIC MODE Books 1-6

MAN IN THE EXPOSITORY MODE Books 1-6





series consultant Geoffrey Summerfield

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KARMA REPAIR KIT: ITEMS 1-4

1. Get enough food to eat,
and eat it.
2. Find a place to sleep where it is quiet,
and sleep there.
3. Reduce intellectual and emotional noise
until you arrive at the silence of yourself,
and listen to it.
- 4.

RICHARD BRAUTIGAN



A HELPING HAND

We gave a helping hand to grass –
and it turned into corn.

We gave a helping hand to fire –
and it turned into a rocket.

Hesitatingly,
cautiously,
we give a helping hand
to people,
to some people . . .

MIROSLAV HOLUB

Translated from the Czech by George Theiner

WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS

Where the rainbow ends
There's going to be a place, brother,
Where the world can sing all sorts of songs,
And we're going to sing together, brother,
You and I, though you're white and I'm not.
It's going to be a sad song, brother,
Because we don't know the tune,
And it's a difficult tune to learn.
But we can learn, brother, you and I.
There's no such tune as a black tune.
There's no such tune as a white tune.
There's only music, brother,
And it's music we're going to sing
Where the rainbow ends.

RICHARD RIVE

SONG OF A HEBREW

Working is another way of praying
You plant in Israel the soul of a tree
You plant in the desert the spirit of gardens.

Praying is another way of singing
You plant in the tree the soul of lemons
You plant in the garden the spirit of roses.

Singing is another way of loving
You plant in the lemons the spirit of your son.
You plant in the roses the soul of your daughter.

Loving is another way of living
You plant in your daughter the spirit of Israel.
You plant in your son the soul of the desert.

DANNIE ABSE

DIRGE

From a friend's friend I taste friendship,
From a friend's friend love,
My spirit in confusion,
Long years I strove,
But now I know that never
Nearer I shall move,
Than a friend's friend to friendship,
To love than a friend's love.

Into the dark night
Resignedly I go,
I am not so afraid of the dark night
As the friends I do not know,
I do not fear the night above
As I fear the friends below.

STEVIE SMITH

HARLEM

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

LANGSTON HUGHES

THE FACT

The going-home sun
smiles my railroad eyes.

I run a rough stick
across the last picket fence.

Under our tulip tree
you wait in the yellow dust
smoothing a lilac dress.

I touch my arms, my chest,
watch my moving feet.

I have to know it's me,
really me, always.

DAVE ETTER



**WARMED THROUGH AND THROUGH BY A BOWL
OF FISH SOUP**

If only! 
the materials for a poem were like soup!

and I could press them into a ball
without losing a drop
through my fingers.

Then I'd hit you in the kisser Splat! 

And you'd know!
what was missing all along:
chowder for the spirit.

LOU LIPSITZ



A GOOD-TALKING CANDLE

I had a good-talking candle
last night in my bedroom.

I was very tired but I wanted
somebody to be with me,
so I lit a candle

and listened to its comfortable
voice of light until I was asleep.

RICHARD BRAUTIGAN

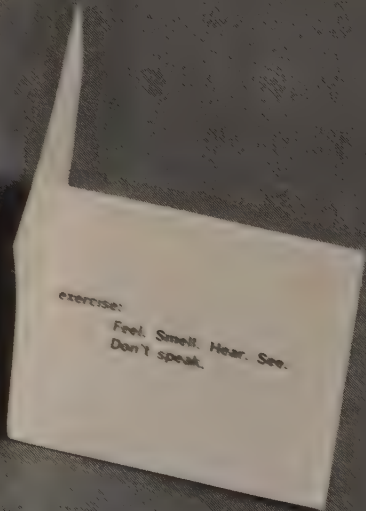
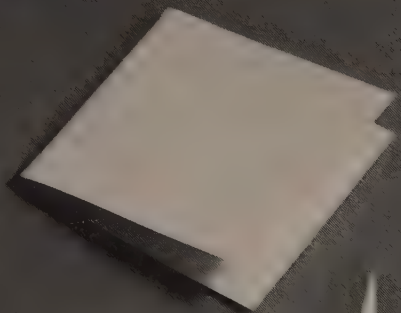
JOY

I could look at
an empty hole for hours
thinking it will
get something in it,

will collect
things. There is
an infinite emptiness
placed there.

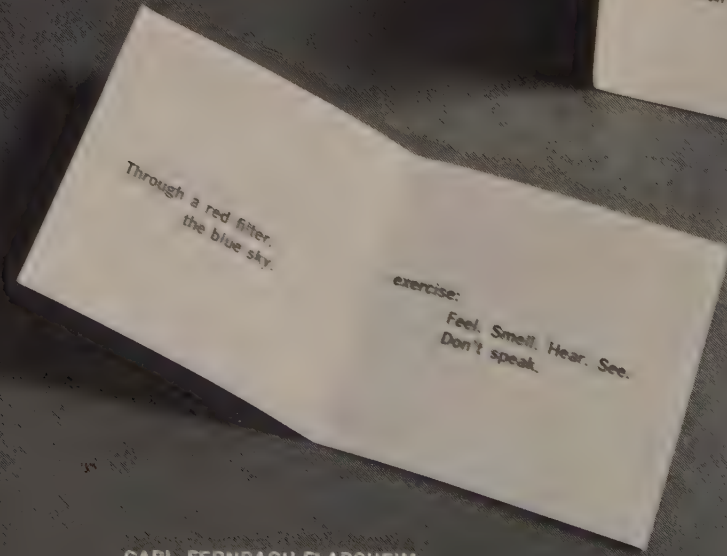
ROBERT CREELEY

EXERCISE



exercise:

Feel. Smell. Hear. See.
Don't speak.



Through a red filter,
the blue sky.

exercise:

Feel. Smell. Hear. See.
Don't speak.

CARL FERNBACH-FLARSHEIM

GONE AWAY

When my body leaves me
I'm lonesome for it.
I've got

eyes, ears,
nose and mouth
and that's all.

Eyes
keep on seeing the
feather blue of the

cold sky,
mouth takes in
hot soup,
nose

smells the frost,

ears hear everything, all
the noises and absences,
but body

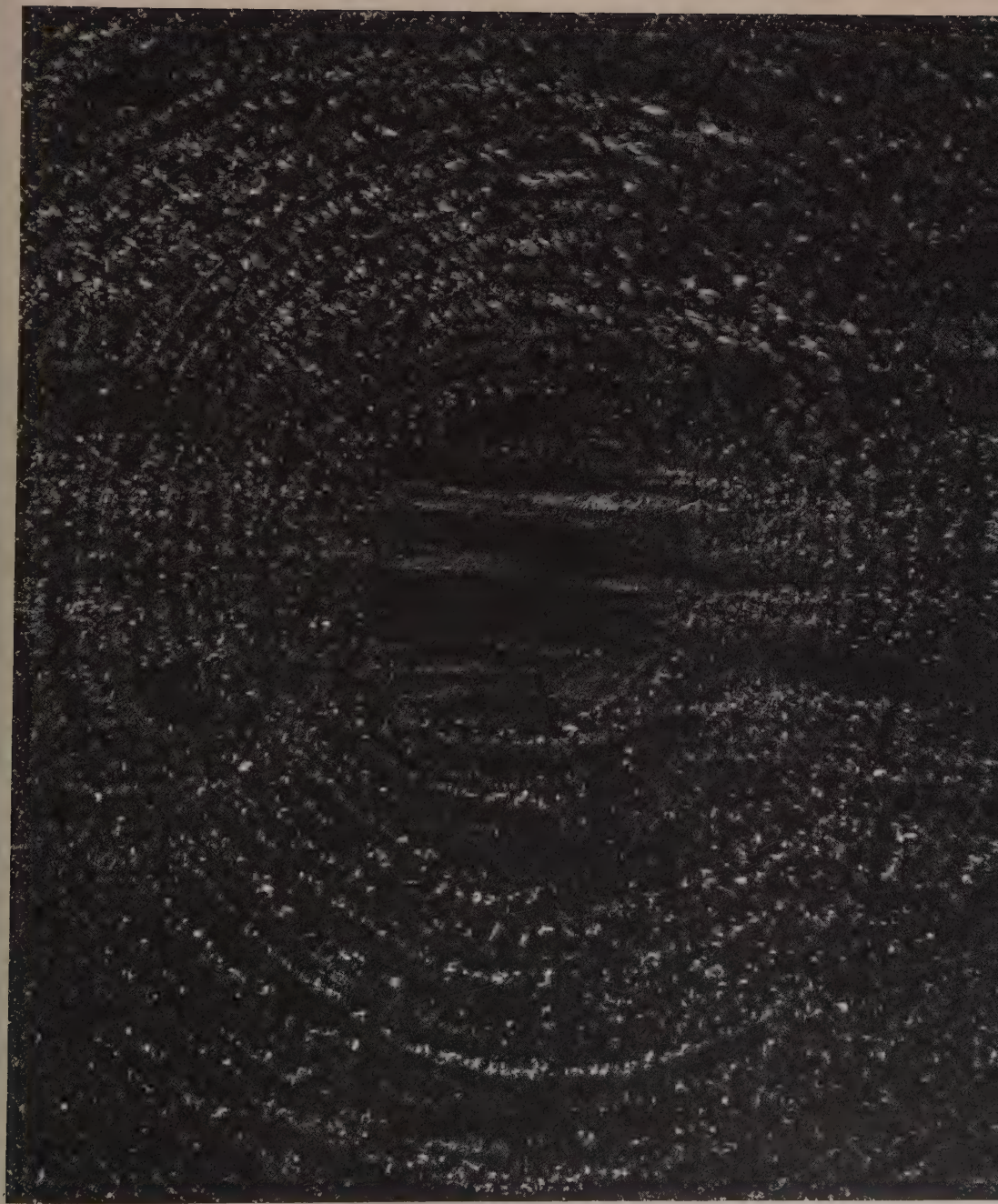
goes away to I don't know where
and it's lonesome to drift
above the space it
fills when it's here.

DENISE LEVERTOV

PALM LEAVES OF CHILDHOOD

When I was very small indeed,
and Joe and Fred were six-year giants,
my father, they and I, with soil
did mix farm-yard manure.
In this we planted coconuts,
naming them by brothers' names.
The palms grew faster far than I;
and soon, ere I could grow a Man,
they, flowering, reached their goal!
Like the ear-rings that my sisters wore
came the tender golden flowers.
I watched them grow from gold to green;
then nuts as large as Tata's head.
I craved the milk I knew they bore.
I listened to the whispering leaves:
to the chattering, rattling, whispering leaves,
when night winds did wake.
They haunt me still in work and play:
those whispering leaves behind the slit
on the cabin wall of childhood's
dreaming and becoming.

G. ADALI-MORTTI



THE DANCERS INHERIT THE PARTY

When I have talked for an hour I feel lousy—
Not so when I have danced for an hour:
The dancers inherit the party
While the talkers wear themselves out and sit in corners alone
and glower.

IAN HAMILTON FINLAY



ANGELS

When we are dead we will all be angels
And we will see how many of us can balance on a pin.
I think we may manage seven or eight of us
Angelically balanced, if we all squeeze in.

IAN HAMILTON FINLAY



SHELL SONG

Under my shell
My pearly shell
My steely shell
My crystal shell
Alone and alone
Alone I dwell.

Huddled in a head
My low bent head
My unbowed head
In its undried blood
Listens at sound
That gives no word.

I call from within
My tunneled wall
Hearing the echo
Of my call,
Sure in the color
Of my shell

More sure of alone
And alone and still.

LENORE MARSHALL



SMELL!

Oh strong-ridged and deeply hollowed
nose of mine! what will you not be smelling?
What tactless asses we are, you and I boney nose
always indiscriminate, always unashamed,
and now it is the souring flowers of the bedraggled
poplars: a festering pulp on the wet earth
beneath them. With what deep thirst
we quicken our desires
to that rank odor of a passing springtime!
Can you not be decent? Can you not reserve your ardors
for something less unlovely? What girl will care
for us, do you think, if we continue in these ways?
Must you taste everything? Must you know everything?
Must you have a part in everything?

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS





M...



RONALD JOHNSON

IN EXTREMIS

I saw my toes the other day.
I hadn't looked at them for months.
Indeed, they might have passed away.
And yet they were my best friends once.

When I was small, I knew them well.
I counted on them up to ten
And put them in my mouth to tell
The larger from the lesser. Then

I loved them better than my ears,
My elbows, adenoids, and heart.
But with the swelling of the years
We drifted, toes and I, apart.

I accuse! Now, gnarled and pale, each said, *j'accuse!*—
I hid them quickly in my shoes.

JOHN UPDIKE



DISGUISES

My selves, my presences,
like uniforms and suits,
some stiff, some soiled, some threadbare,
and not all easy-fitting,
hang somewhere in the house.

A friend or a misfortune
will force me, on occasion,
into a sober habit,
uncomfortably formal,
in keeping, though unwise,

But otherwise I wear
something old and easy,
with little thought to please,
nor a glance in the mirror,
nor a care for size;

being caught, in consequence,
sporting the wrong color
in inappropriate weather—
odd shirts, uneven socks,
and most unsuitable ties.

I should have a tailor,
or, failing him, a mirror;
but being possessed of neither,
I sit in my stubborn skin and count
all clothing as disguise.

ALASTAIR REID



ASILE IN BLACK LEATHER SUIT

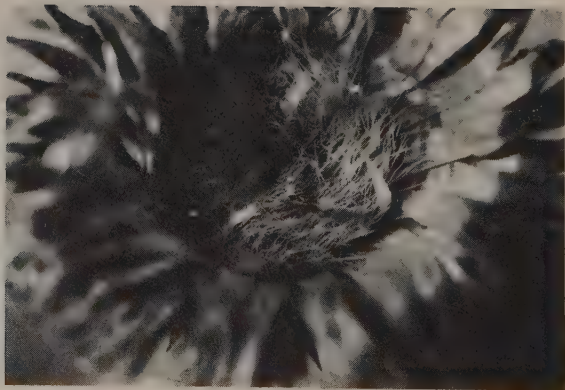
CASTLES

One man is chosen king of every castle
Whose bricks are soft as snow or crumbling clay.
Embedded in them here and there's a thistle.
The game is for a June or July day.

The others have to stay below the castle.
Like servants or like slaves they never say
It's their turn to be kings. Can they not wrestle?
They should have shots at each alternately.

The kings, however, also build the castle.
The work is slow and serious—and gay.
Whole hordes of castles harden as they settle.
The kings leap down and land in moats of hay.

IAN HAMILTON FINLAY



RIVER APPLES

Tiny wrinkled apples
hang from purple boughs
at the river's edge.

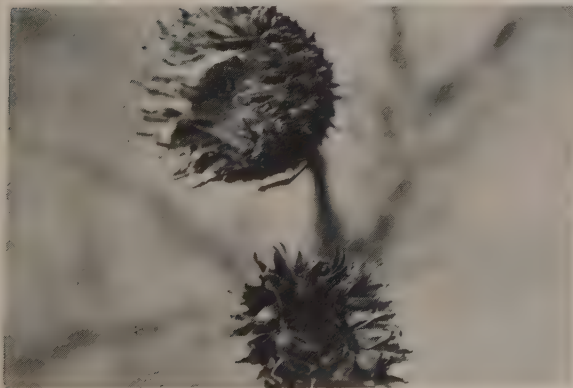
A gray dandelion
fluffs the trampled grass:
say goodbye to Grandma.

Under the railroad bridge
ducks skulk among rocks
and torsos of trees.

Only one bent Negro
still waits for a fish.
"No Sunday luck," he says.

I pick two apples
then leave the cold park.
It's all I can do.

DAVE ETTER



THE LONELY MAN

A cat sits on the pavement by the house.
It lets itself be touched, then slides away.
A girl goes by in a hood; the winter noon's
Long shadows lengthen. The cat is gray,
It sits there. It sits there all day, every day.

A collie bounds into my arms: he is a dog
And, therefore, finds nothing human alien.
He lives at the preacher's with a pair of cats.
The soft half-Persian sidles to me;
Indoors, the old white one watches blindly.

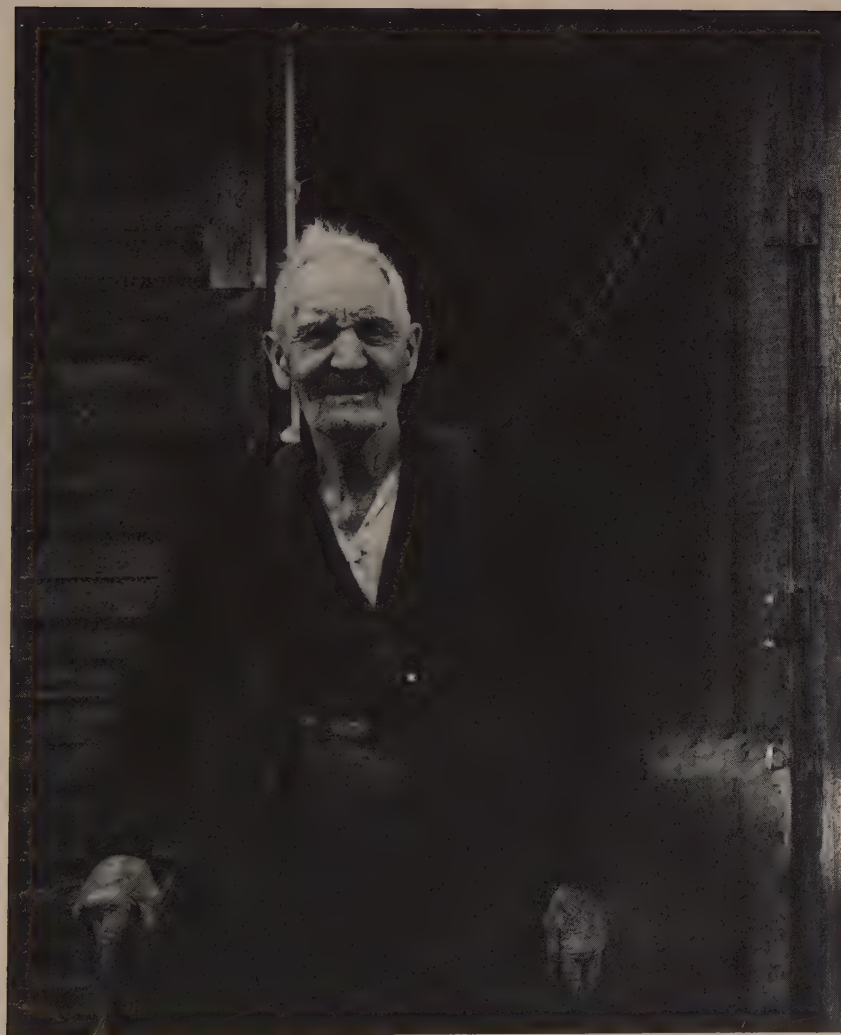
How cold it is! Some snow slides from a roof
When a squirrel jumps off it to a squirrel-proof
Feeding-station; and, a lot of two yards down,
A fat spaniel snuffles out to me
And sobers me with his untrusting frown.

He worries about his yard: past it, it's my affair
If I halt Earth in her track—his duty's done.
And the cat and the collie worry about the old one:
They come, when she's out too, so uncertainly. . . .
It's my block; I know them, just as they know me.

As for the others, those who wake up every day
And feed these, keep the houses, ride away
To work—I don't know them, they don't know me.
Are we friends or enemies? Why, who can say?
We nod to each other sometimes, in humanity,

Or search one another's faces with a yearning
Remnant of faith that's almost animal. . . .
The gray cat that just sits there: surely it is learning
To be a man; will find, soon, *some especial*
Opening in a good firm for a former cat.

RANDALL JARRELL



EVANS

Evans? Yes, many a time
I came down his bare flight
Of stairs into the gaunt kitchen
With its wood fire, where crickets sang
Accompaniment to the black kettle's
Whine, and so into the cold
Dark to smother in the thick tide
Of night that drifted about the walls
Of his stark farm on the hill ridge.

It was not the dark filling my eyes
And mouth appalled me; not even the drip
Of rain like blood from the one tree
Weather-tortured. It was the dark
Silting the veins of that sick man
I left stranded upon the vast
And lonely shore of his bleak bed.

R. S. THOMAS

THE MARKET MAN

The walnut brains think moist
in their light tan skulls;
the apples croon redly
of their tooth white pulp;
and the squash curves voluptuously
in its yellow skin.

It is cold and the market man
burns an orange crate;
it is dark and bare bulbs hang down
like fiery glass pears.

The market man has big blunt thumbs,
he feels chapped melons;
the market man has a strong mouth,
dry as potato dust;
the market man has black grape eyes,
no seeds show in them.

The market man has lonely shanks,
he splats lemons against a wall;
the market man is angry at the cold,
he strips the heads of lettuce down
and throws the green leaves on the cobble street;
the market man smells the salty river,
he bites an onion open with his teeth
and floods the black night with tears and burning.

JOHN RATTI



IN THE SNACK BAR

A cup capsizes along the formica,
slithering with a dull clatter.

A few heads turn in the crowded evening snack bar.

An old man is trying to get to his feet
from the low round stool fixed to the floor.

pushes Slowly he levers himself up, his hands have no power.

He is up as far as he can get. The dismal hump
looming over him forces his head down.

He stands in his stained beltless gabardine
like a monstrous animal caught in a tent
in some story. He sways slightly,
the face not seen, bent down
in shadow under his cap.

Even on his feet he is staring at the floor
or would be, if he could see.

I notice now his stick, once painted white
but scuffed and muddy, hanging from his right arm.

Long blind, hunchback born, half paralyzed
he stands

fumbling with the stick
and speaks:

"I want—to go to the—toilet."

It is down two flights of stairs, but we go.

I take his arm. "Give me—your arm—it's better," he says.

Inch by inch we drift towards the stairs.

A few yards of floor are like a landscape

to be negotiated, in the slow setting out
time has almost stopped. I concentrate

my life to his: crunch of spilled sugar,
slidy puddle from the night's umbrellas,
table edges, people's feet,

hiss of the coffee machine, voices and laughter,
smell of a cigar, hamburgers, wet coats steaming,
and the slow dangerous inches to the stairs.

I put his right hand on the rail
and take his stick. He clings to me. The stick
is in his left hand, probing the treads.
I guide his arm and tell him the steps.
And slowly we go down. And slowly we go down.
White tiles and mirrors at last. He shambles
uncouth into the clinical gleam.
I set him in position, stand behind him
and wait with his stick.
His brooding reflection darkens the mirror
but the trickle of his water is thin and slow,
an old man's apology for living.
Painful ages to close his trousers and coat—
I do up the last buttons for him.
He asks doubtfully, "Can I—wash my hands?"
I fill the basin, clasp his soft fingers round the soap.
He washes, feebly, patiently. There is no towel.
I press the pedal of the drier, draw his hands
gently into the roar of the hot air.
But he cannot rub them together,
drags out a handkerchief to finish.
He is glad to leave the contraption, and face the stairs.
He climbs, and steadily enough.
He climbs, we climb. He climbs
with many pauses but with that one
persisting patience of the undefeated
which is the nature of man when all is said.
And slowly we go up. And slowly we go up.
The faltering, unfaltering steps
take him at last to the door
across that endless, yet not endless waste of floor.
I watch him helped on a bus. It shudders off in the rain.
The conductor bends to hear where he wants to go.

Wherever he could go it would be dark
and yet he must trust men.
Without emabrassment or shame
he must announce his most pitiful needs
in a public place. No one sees his face.
Does he know how frightening he is in his strangeness
under his mountainous coat, his hands like wet leaves
stuck to the half-white stick?
His life depends on many who would evade him.
But he cannot reckon up the chances,
having one thing to do,
to haul his blind hump through these rains of August.
Dear Christ, to be born for this!

EDWIN MORGAN



A TRUCKER

Sometimes it is like a beast
barely controlled by a man.
But the cabin is lofty
as a skull, and all the rest
extends from his foot as an
enormous throbbing body:

if he left anything to
chance—see his great frame capsize,
and his rubber limbs explode
whirling! and see there follow
a bright fountain of red eyes
tinkling sightless to the road.

THOM GUNN

I AM A

Cosmonaut
Cradled in dangers
Orbiting a garden universe
Snipping cosmos, probing Venus,
Sighting summer's end blindly,
Weightily weightless
Spinning out of reach,
 out
 of
 reach
Signaling strangers.

LENORE MARSHALL

THE OLD PILOT

He discovers himself on an old airfield.
He thinks he was there before,
but rain has washed out the lettering of a sign.
A single biplane, all struts and wires,
stands in the long grass and wildflowers.
He pulls himself into the narrow cockpit
although his muscles are stiff
and sits like an egg in a nest of canvas.
He sees that the machine gun has rusted.
The glass over the instruments
has broken, and the red arrows are gone
from his gas gauge and his altimeter.
When he looks up, his propeller is turning,
although no one was there to snap it.
He lets out the throttle. The engine catches
and the propeller spins into the wind.
He bumps over holes in the grass,
and he remembers to pull back on the stick.
He rises from the land in a high bounce
which gets higher, and suddenly he is flying again.
He feels the old fear, and rising over the fields
the old gratitude. In the distance, circling
in a beam of late sun like birds migrating,
there are the wings of a thousand biplanes.

DONALD HALL

THE DOUBLE-PLAY

In his sea lit
distance, the pitcher winding
like a clock about to chime comes down with

the ball, hit
sharply, under the artificial
banks of arc-lights, bounds like a vanishing string

over the green
to the shortstop magically
scoops to his right whirling above his invisible

shadows
in the dust redirects
its flight to the running poised second baseman

pirouettes
leaping, above the slide, to throw
from mid-air, across the colored tightened interval,

to the leaning-
out first baseman ends the dance
drawing it disappearing into his long brown glove

stretches. What
is too swift for deception
is final, lost, among the loosened figures

jogging off the field
(the pitcher walks), casual
in the space where the poem has happened.

ROBERT WALLACE

TO THE SUN

The blind boy said: "Darkness can be your friend
Or enemy. You have to understand it. If you destroy
Maybe you'll hurt yourself. I try to know my darkness."

It was the day

An arrow on the chart pointed: "To the sun."

The blind boy said: "A boy

Running on the path tripped me. When I picked myself up from the
bushes

I had lost my sense of the way.

I lost all my cues. I didn't know where to turn.

I called. Nobody heard.

The worst," the blind boy said, "isn't to be blind

But to lose direction."

This was the day

A rocket turned into a planet

A planet loosed from a platform by a man

Fell upward into space

Past gravitation, racing to the sun.

The blind boy said: "You never know

Whether you are going toward good things or trouble.

Darkness is just like light. I thought

About that a lot. Nobody can look into the sun."

LEMORE MARSHALL



**THE SHOOTING OF JOHN DILLINGER
OUTSIDE
THE BIOGRAPH THEATER,
JULY 22, 1934**

Chicago ran a fever of a hundred and one that groggy Sunday.
A reporter fried an egg on a sidewalk; the air looked shaky.
And a hundred thousand people were in the lake like shirts in
a laundry.

Why was Johnny lonely?

Not because two dozen solid citizens, heat-struck, had keeled
over backward.

Not because those lawful souls had fallen out of their sockets
and melted.

But because the sun went down like a lump in a furnace or a
bull in the Stockyards.

Where was Johnny headed?

Under the Biograph Theater sign that said, "Our Air is
Refrigerated."

Past seventeen FBI men and four policemen who stood in
doorways and sweated.

Johnny sat down in a cold seat to watch Clark Gable get
electrocuted.

Had Johnny been mistreated?

Yes, but Gable told the D. A. he'd rather fry than be shut up
forever.

Two women sat by Johnny. One looked sweet, one looked like
J. Edgar Hoover.

Polly Hamilton made him feel hot, but Anna Sage made him
shiver.

Was Johnny a good lover?

Yes, but he passed out his share of squeezes and pokes like a
jittery masher

While Agent Purvis sneaked up and down the aisle like an
extra usher,

Trying to make sure they wouldn't slip out till the show was
over.

phony

Was Johnny a fourflusher?

No, not if he knew the game. He got it up or got it back.
But he liked to take snapshots of policemen with his own
Kodak,

And once in a while he liked to take them with an automatic.
Why was Johnny frantic?

Because he couldn't take a walk or sit down in a movie
Without being afraid he'd run smack into somebody
Who'd point at his rearranged face and holler, "Johnny!"
Was Johnny ugly?

Yes, because Dr. Wilhelm Loeser had given him a new profile
With a baggy jawline and squint eyes and an erased dimple,
With kangaroo-tendon cheekbones and a gigolo's mustache
that should've been illegal.

Did Johnny love a girl?

Yes, a good-looking, hard-headed Indian named Billie
Frechette.

He wanted to marry her and lie down and try to get over it,
But she was locked in jail for giving him first-aid and comfort.
Did Johnny feel hurt?

He felt like breaking a bank or jumping over a railing
Into some panicky teller's cage to shout, "Reach for the
ceiling!"

Or like kicking some vice president in the bum checks and
smiling.

What was he really doing?

Going up the aisle with the crowd and into the lobby
With Polly saying, "Would *you* do what Clark done?" And
Johnny saying, *Maybe.*"

And Anna saying, "If he'd been smart, he'd of acted like Bing
Crosby."

Did Johnny look flashy?

Yes, his white-on-white shirt and tie were luminous.
His trousers were creased like knives to the tops of his shoes,
And his yellow straw hat came down to his dark glasses.

Was Johnny suspicious?

Yes, and when Agent Purvis signalled with a trembling cigar,

Johnny ducked left and ran out of the theater,
And innocent Polly and squealing Anna were left nowhere.
Was Johnny a fast runner?
No, but he crouched and scurried past a friendly liquor store
Under the coupled arms of double-daters, under awnings,
under stars,
To the curb at the mouth of an alley. He hunched there.
Was Johnny a thinker?
No, but he was thinking more or less of Billie Frechette
Who was lost in prison for longer than he could possibly wait,
And then it was suddenly too hard to think around a bullet.
Did anyone shoot straight?
Yes, but Mrs. Etta Natalsky fell out from under her picture hat.
Theresa Paulus sprawled on the sidewalk, clutching her left
foot.
And both of them groaned loud and long under the streetlight.
Did Johnny like that?
No, but he lay down with those strange women, his face in the
alley,
One shoe off, cinders in his mouth, his eyelids heavy.
When they shouted questions at him, he talked back to
nobody.
Did Johnny lie easy?
Yes, holding his gun and holding his breath as a last trick,
He waited, but when the Agents came close, his breath
wouldn't work.
Clark Cable walked his last mile; Johnny ran half a block.
Did he run out of luck?
Yes, before he was cool, they had him spread out on dished-in
marble
In the Cook County Morgue, surrounded by babbling people
With a crime reporter presiding over the head of the table.
Did Johnny have a soul?
Yes, and it was climbing his slippery wind-pipe like a trapped
burglar.
It was beating the inside of his ribcage, hollering, "Let me out
of here!"

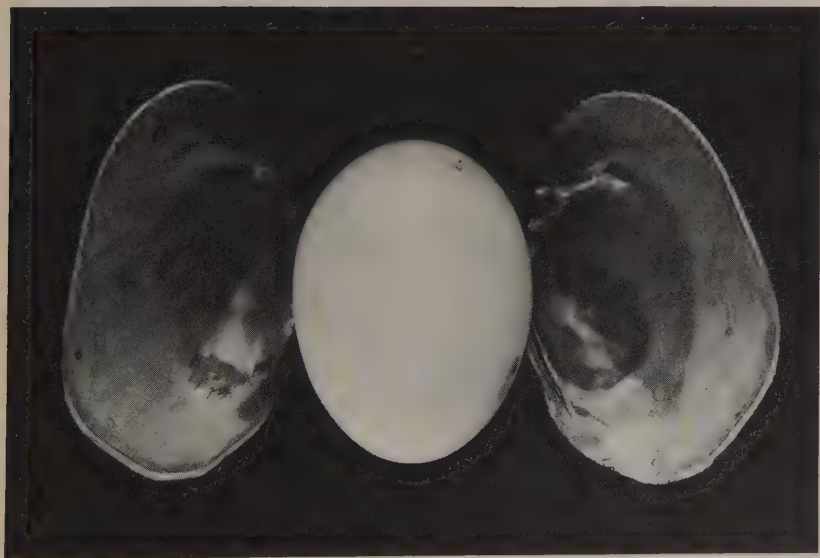
Maybe it got out, and maybe it just stayed there.
Was Johnny a money-maker?
Yes, and thousands paid 25¢ to see him, mostly women,
And one said, "I wouldn't have come, except he's a moral
lesson,"
And another, "I'm disappointed. He feels like a dead man."
Did Johnny have a brain?
Yes, and it always worked best through the worst of dangers,
Through flat-footed hammerlocks, through guarded doors,
around corners,
But it got taken out in the morgue and sold to some doctors.
Could Johnny take orders?
No, but he stayed in the wicker basket carried by six men
Through the bulging crowd to the hearse and let himself be
locked in,
And he stayed put as it went driving south in a driving rain.
And he didn't get stolen?
No, not even after his old hard-nosed dad refused to sell
The quick-drawing corpse for \$10,000 to somebody in a
carnival.
He figured he'd let *Johnny* decide how to get to Hell.
Did anyone wish him well?
Yes, half of Indiana camped in the family pasture,
And the minister said, "With luck, he could have been a
minister."
And up the sleeve of his oversized gray suit, Johnny twitched
a finger.
Does anyone remember?
Everyone still alive. And some dead ones. It was a new kind of
holiday
With hot and cold drinks and hot and cold tears. They planted
him in a cemetery
With three unknown vice presidents, Benjamin Harrison, and
James Whitcomb Riley,
Who never held up anybody.

DAVID WAGONER

NEWS FROM BACK OF YONDER

They ran into the lumber room,
But Tom, whose name was Rodney,
Couldn't make it; so, pushing
Out to the road again, she met
Her mother for the first time,
And an apple blinking to and fro
On a sort of hair, from which
Nothing grew except a tobogganslide.
Wow! soon the lawnchairs will be ripe—
There! feel *those* delicate little ribs!
Ah, nothing quite so pretty as the chest
Of a steaming bowl of tomato soup!

KENNETH PATCHEN



HAZARDOUS OCCUPATIONS

Jugglers keep six bottles in the air.
Club swingers toss up six and eight.
The knife throwers miss each other's
 ears by a hair and the steel quivers
 in the target wood.
The trapeze battlers do a back-and-forth
 high in the air with a girl's feet
 and ankles upside down.
So they earn a living—till they miss
 once, twice, even three times.
So they live on hate and love as gypsies
 live in satin skins and shiny eyes.
In their graves do the elbows jostle once
 in a blue moon—and wriggle to throw
 a kiss answering a dreamed-of applause?
Do the bones repeat: It's a *good* act—
 we got a *good* hand . . . ?

CARL SANDBURG

YASE: SEPTEMBER

Old Mrs. Kawabata
cuts down the tall spike weeds—
more in two hours
than I can get done in a day.

out of a mountain
of grass and thistle
she saved five dusty stalks
of ragged wild blue flower
and put them in my kitchen
in a jar.

GARY SNYDER



HAND IN CLASPED HAND

Hand in clasped hand and side pressed close to side,
Silently stand some children of the poor,
And shyly, hungry eyes half-turned aside,
Observe the eater through the open door.

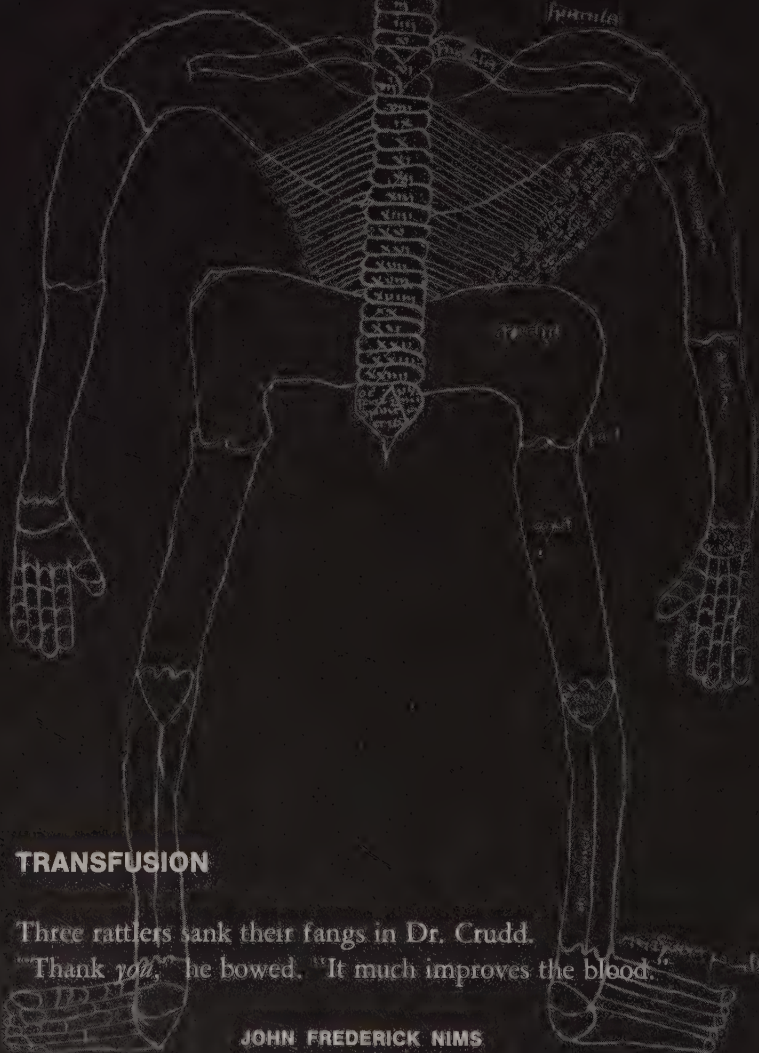
ANONYMOUS

Translated from the Sanskrit by John Brough

PASTORAL

Once Cruddy in the countryside
Touched poison ivy. And it died!

JOHN FREDERICK NIMS



TRANSFUSION

Three rattlers sank their fangs in Dr. Crudd.
"Thank you," he bowed. "It much improves the blood."

JOHN FREDERICK NIMS

JOY TO THE WORLD

A certain Mrs. Pickney, sixty-six,
died in London Christmas Day
It took the R.S.P.C.A.
less than a week
to carry out her final will. *Kill.*
How speedy probate comes in England.

Two donkeys dead, three cats destroyed.
Mr. Peter Hall-Patch, who fired the shots,
told the evening papers
*"let's face it
donkeys and horses
don't worry about tomorrow
just about their next meal."*
Not a very romantic quote
but poetry is lost on animals
though for an instant every dying thing
understands the language of his bullet.

May Mr. Hall-Patch find a death humane
under horses' hoofs
unloved in the rain.

ROD MCKUEN

DARK BLOOD

There were bizarre beginnings in old lands for the making of me. There were sugar sands and islands of fern and pearl, palm jungles and stretches of a never-ending sea.

There were the wooing nights of tropical lands and the cool discretion of flowering plains between two stalwart hills. They nurtured my coming with wanderlust. I sucked fevers of adventure through my veins with my mother's milk.

Someday I shall go to the tropical lands of my birth, to the coasts of continents and the tiny wharves of island shores. I shall roam the Balkans and the hot lanes of Africa and Asia. I shall stand on mountain tops and gaze on fertile homes below.

And when I return to Mobile I shall go by the way of Panama and Bocas del Toro to the littered streets and the one-room shacks of my old poverty, and blazing suns of other lands may struggle then to reconcile the pride and pain in me.

MARGARET WALKER



THE CHILD

He lives among a dog,
a tricycle, and a friend.
Nobody owns him.

He walks by himself, beside
the black pool, in the cave
where icicles of rock

rain hard water,
and the walls are rough
with the light of stone.

He hears low talking
without words.
The hand of a wind touches him.

He walks until he is tired
or somebody calls him.
He leaves right away.

When he plays with his friend
he stops suddenly
to hear the black water.

DONALD HALL

THE PARTY

They served tea in the sandpile, together with
Mudpies baked on the sidewalk.

After tea

The youngest said that he had had a good dinner,
The oldest dressed for a dance,
And they sallied forth together with water pots
To moisten a rusted fire truck on account of it
Might rain.

I watched from my study,
Thought of my part in these contributions to world
Gaiety, and resolved
That the very least acknowledgment I could make
Would be to join them;

so we

All took our watering pots (filled with pies)
And poured tea on our dog. Then I kissed the children
And told them that when they grew up we would have
Real tea parties.
"That did be fun!" the youngest shouted, and ate pies
With wild surmise.

REED WHITEMORE

TO BE CLOSELY WRITTEN ON A SMALL PIECE
OF PAPER WHICH FOLDED INTO A
TIGHT LOZENGE WILL FIT ANY GIRL'S LOCKET

Lo the leaves
Upon the new autumn grass—
Look at them well . !

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

TO A CHILD AT THE PIANO

Play the tune again; but this time
with more regard for the movement at the source of it,
and less attention to time. Time falls
curiously in the course of it.

Play the tune again; not watching
your fingering, but forgetting, letting flow
the sound till it surrounds you. Do not count
or even think. Let go.

Play the tune again; but try to be
nobody, nothing, as though the pace
of the sound were your heart beating, as though
the music were your face.

Play the tune again. It should be easier
to think less every time of the notes, of the measure.
It is all an arrangement of silence. Be silent, and then
play it for your pleasure.

Play the tune again; and this time, when it ends,
do not ask me what I think. Feel what is happening
strangely in the room as the sound glooms over
you, me, everything.

Now,
play the tune again.

ALASTAIR REID



VARIATIONS FOR TWO PIANOS

There is no music now in all Arkansas.
Higgins is gone, taking both his pianos.

Movers dismantled the instruments, away
Sped the vans. The first detour untuned the strings.

There is no music now in all Arkansas.

Up Main Street, past the cold shopfronts of Conway,
The brash, self-important brick of the college,

Higgins is gone, taking both his pianos.

Warm evenings, the windows open, he would play
Something of Mozart's for his pupils, the birds,

There is no music now in all Arkansas.

How shall the mockingbird mend her trill, the jay
His eccentric attack, lacking a teacher?

Higgins is gone, taking both his pianos.
There is no music now in all Arkansas.

DONALD JUSTICE

HEARTHQUAKE

A week has passed without a word being said:
No headlines, though that's natural, I suppose
Since there were no injured, let alone dead,
Yet I expected a paragraph or so.
But no, not even comment passed in bars,
No gossip over fences while shirts flap
And sheets boast on the line like sails on spars,
And yet it happened: I can swear to that.
I remember it as if it were last night,
My sitting smug and cosy as a cat
Until the carpet suddenly took fright
And buckled beneath my feet. Walls winched. The clock
Upon the mantelpiece began to dance;
The photograph of me aged twenty-one fell flat;
Glass cracked. The air went cold with shock.
I did not sleep at all well through that night
Nor have I since. I cannot understand
Why no one—not my nearest neighbor even—
Refers to what occurred on that strange evening
Unless, in some way difficult to see,
He is afraid to mention it. Like me.

VERNON SCANNELL

THE RICK OF GREEN WOOD

In the woodyard were green and dry
woods fanning out, behind
a valley below
a pleasure for the eye to go.

Woodpile by the buzzsaw. I heard
the woodsman down in the thicket. I don't
want a rick of green wood, I told him
I want cherry or alder or something strong
and thin, or thick if dry, but I don't
want the green wood, my wife would die

Her back is slender
and the wood I get must not
bend her too much through the day.

Aye, the wood is some green
and some dry, the cherry thin of bark
cut in July.

My name is Burlingame
said the woodcutter.
My name is Dorn, I said.
I buzz on Friday if the weather cools
said Burlingame, enough of names.

Out of the thicket my daughter was walking
singing—

backtracking the horse hoof
gone in earlier this morning, the woodcutter's horse
pulling the alder, the fir, the hemlock
above the valley

in the november
air, in the world, that was getting colder
as we stood there in the woodyard talking
pleasantly, of the green wood and the dry.

EDWARD DORN



THE AURA

He used to wake to him
With a sense of music coming
Along with a body in movement.
It swayed with the motion of a hip
Rolling into the bathroom,
And, lying in bed in the winter dark

Of fathers, he heard rock-and-roll
Closed off while water ran through it,
Then the door opening, music
Opening, strolling down the hall,
Bad music moving all over
The house, electric guitars that followed

Some body around. It was his son,
With his portable radio always
At his belt, leaning over, adjusting the dial
For disc jockeys. That would be
The Skimmers, and that the Last
Survivors, moaning afar in the kitchen,

Who moved when the living moved.
He could hear him coming
From far away, every dawn,
And now the sound still coming
From everywhere is grief,
Unstoppable. At the beginning

Of his teens, his last year
Of bicycles, the wild
Music, travelling through the suburbs
From junior high, was broken on the road.
But it leapt everywhere
Into odd places; from every angle

It does not cease to be heard, the aura
Surrounding his son. He cannot hear it early
In the morning, unless he turns on his radio
By the bed, or leaves it on all night,
But in supermarkets it comes
Forth from the walls; it glances

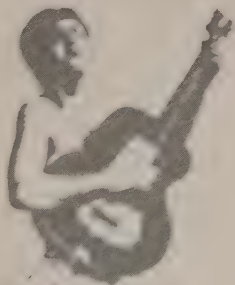
From plate glass in department stores,
And he moves within his boy's
Chosen sounds: in cars, theatres,
In filling stations, in beer joints,
Where he sits as though in the next phase
His son would have lived, hearing voices

Giving prizes for naming of tunes, those stations
Never off the air. He sits still
Wherever he is, as though caught
With music on him, or as though he were
About to be given it somewhere
In the region of the stomach.

That sound is the same, and yet not —
There is too much steadiness in it: none
Is carried rightly, none wavers
Without the motion of adolescent walking, none
Lumbers as it should. Still, it is there
In trees of girls, in fake folk singers

From Brooklyn, and he enters, anywhere,
His son's life without the waking-
to-it, the irreplaceable motion
Of a body. Bongoes. Steel
Guitars. A precious cheapness
He would have grown out of. Music.

JAMES DICKEY

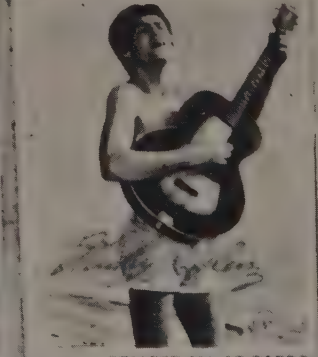




ALL 44 CARDS



COLLECT ALL 44 CARDS



COLLECT ALL 44 CARDS



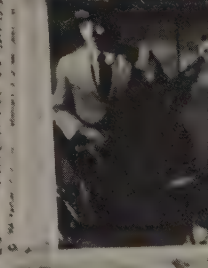
COLLECT ALL 44 CARDS



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COLLECT ALL 44 CARDS



ARCHIVES

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EDWIN MORGAN

MY GRANDMOTHER

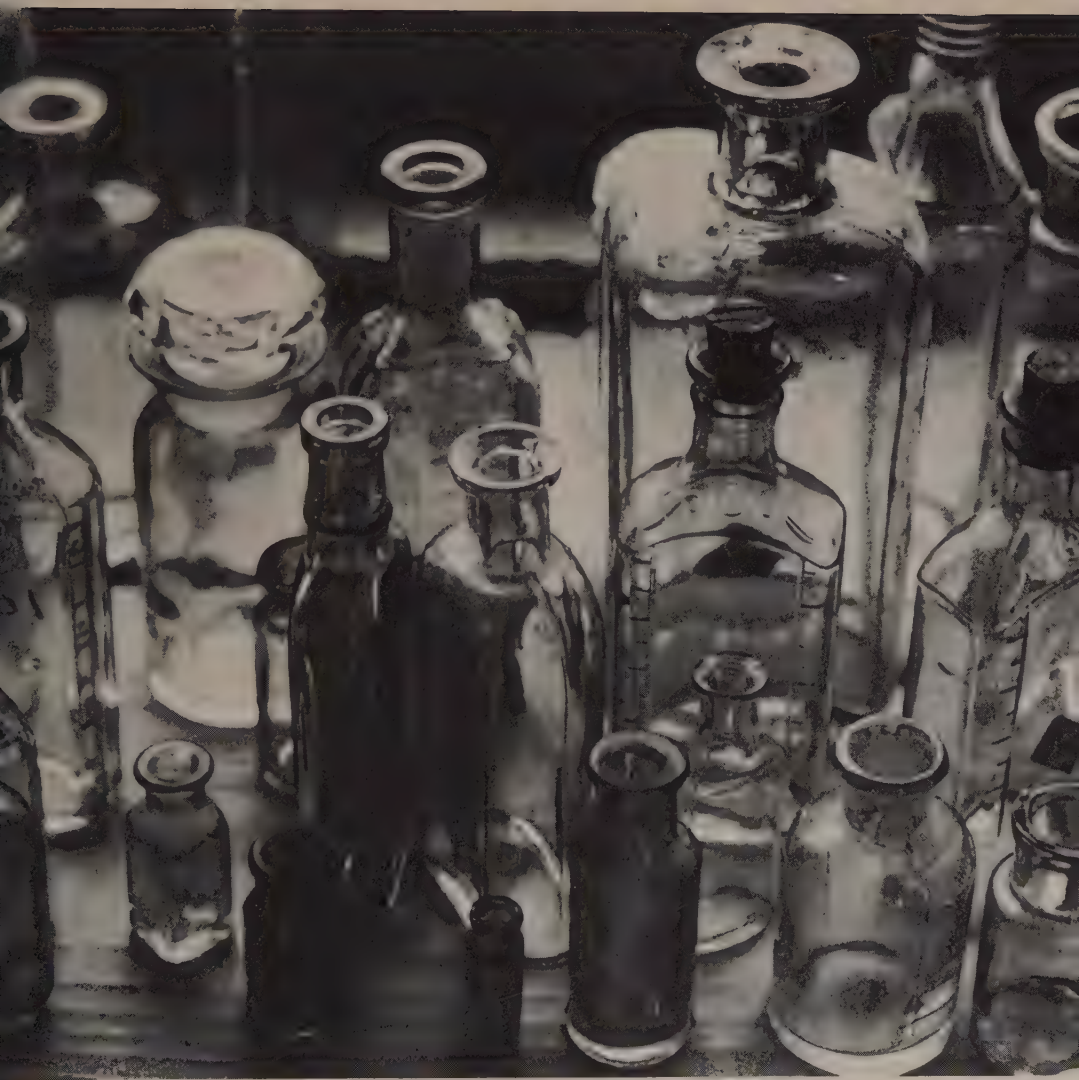
She kept an antique shop—or it kept her.
Among Apostle spoons and Bristol glass,
The faded silks, the heavy furniture,
She watched her own reflection in the brass
Salvers and silver bowls, as if to prove
Polish was all, there was no need of love.

And I remember how I once refused
To go out with her, since I was afraid.
It was perhaps a wish not to be used
Like antique objects. Though she never said
That she was hurt, I still could feel the guilt
Of that refusal, guessing how she felt.

Later, too frail to keep a shop, she put
All her best things in one long narrow room.
The place smelled old, of things too long kept shut,
The smell of absences where shadows come
That can't be polished. There was nothing then
To give her own reflection back again.

And when she died I felt no grief at all,
Only the guilt of what I once refused.
I walked into her room among the tall
Sideboards and cupboards—things she never used
But needed: and no finger-marks were there,
Only the new dust falling through the air.

ELIZABETH JENNINGS



STROKES

The left side of her world is gone—
the rest sustained by memory
and a realization: There are still the children.

Going down our porch steps her pastor
calls back: "We are proud of her recovery,
and there is a chiropractor up in Galesburg . . ."

The birthdays of the old require such candles.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

MARY BLY

I sit here, doing nothing, alone, worn out by long winter.
I feel the light breath of the newborn child.
Her face is smooth as the side of an apricot,
Eyes quick as her blond mother's hands.
She has full, soft, red hair, and as she lies quiet
In her tall mother's arms, her delicate hands
Weave back and forth.
I feel the seasons changing beneath me,
Under the floor.
She is braiding the waters of air into the plaited manes
Of happy colts.
They canter, without making a sound, along the shores
Of melting snow.

JAMES WRIGHT

SHE LOVES ME

she loves me

she loves me not

she loves

she loves me

she

she loves

she

EMMETT WILLIAMS

HIGH MOMENTS

Keep this flower to remember me by.
 So she told him.
Keep this, remember me, remember.
Fold this flower where you never forget.
Put me by where time no longer counts.
Then come back to a sure remembering.

Night itself, night is one long dark flower.
She said night knows deep rememberings,
All flowers being some kind of remembering
 And night itself folding up like
 many smooth dark flowers.

Find me like the night finds.
She measured herself so.
Keep me like the night keeps
For I have night deeps in me.

Flesh is a doom and a prison.
Flesh jails those only flesh.
 Air speaks nevertheless,
 spray, fire, air,
 thin voices beyond capture
 save only in remembering
 the luster of lost stars,
 the reach for a wafer of moon.

Let us talk it over long
and wear cream gold buttons
and be proud we have anger and pride together,

remembering high loveliness hovers in time
and is made of passing moments.

I have kept high moments.
They go round and round in me.

CARL SANDBURG



and she says things like,
"Do you think it's going to rain?"
and I say, "It beats me,"
and she says, "Oh,"
and looks a little sad
at the clear blue California sky,
I think: Thank God, it's you, baby, this time
instead of me.

RICHARD BRAUTIGAN

THE FINGERS OF YOUR THOUGHTS

The fingers of your thoughts
are moulding your face
ceaselessly.

The wavelets of your thoughts
are washing your face
beautiful.

CHARLES REZNIKOFF



TRIO

Coming up Buchanan Street, quickly, on a sharp winter
evening

a young man and two girls, under the Christmas lights—

The young man carries a new guitar in his arms,

the girl on the inside carries a very young baby,

and the girl on the outside carries a chihuahua.

And the three of them are laughing, their breath rises

in a cloud of happiness, and as they pass

guitar the boy says, "Wait till he sees this but!"

The chihuahua has a tiny Royal Stewart tartan coat like a
teapot-holder.

the baby in its white shawl is all bright eyes and mouth like
favours in a fresh sweet cake,

the guitar swells out under its milky plastic cover, tied at the
neck with silver tinsel tape and a brisk sprig of mistletoe.

Orphean sprig! Melting baby! Warm chihuahua!

The vale of tears is powerless before you.

Whether Christ is born, or is not born, you
put paid to fate, it abdicates

under the Christmas lights.

Monsters of the year

go blank, are scattered back,

can't bear this march of three.

—And the three have passed, vanished in the crowd

(yet not vanished, for in their arms they wind

the life of men and beasts, and music,

laughter ringing them round like a guard)

at the end of this winter's day.

EDWIN MORGAN

THE COMPUTER'S FIRST CHRISTMAS CARD

jollymerry
hollyberry
jollyberry
merryholly
happyjolly
jollyjelly
jellybelly
bellymerry
hollyheppy
jollyMolly
marryJerry
merryHarry
hoppyBarry
heppyJarrry
boppyheppy
berryjorry
jorryjolly
moppyjelly
Mollymerry
Jerryjolly
bellyboppy
jorryhoppy
hollymoppy
Barrymerry
Jarrryhappy
happyboppy
boppyjolly
jollymerry
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EDWIN MORGAN

A THROWN A

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E. E. CUMMINGS



ON THE PARKBENCH

On the parkbench sleeps a small bird-shaped man
In a tophat and orange-purple riding boots flecked
With chocolate, for he had spent the afternoon
In an ice cream saloon. Curled up in his lap
Is a very tall old lady; around them,
On the grass, behind the grass, and smack up
Against the grass, are suitcases, carafes, satchels,
Kegs, tubs, platters, sacks, jars . . . and all filled
With the makings of exotic sandwiches. Ah . . .
That's why the policeman looks so sallow—
He's a pot of mustard!

KENNETH PATCHEN

MEMORY

I can remember wind-swept streets of cities
on cold and blustery nights, on rainy days;
heads under shabby felts and parasols
and shoulders hunched against a sharp concern;
seeing hurt bewilderment on poor faces,
smelling a deep and sinister unrest
these brooding people cautiously caress;
hearing ghostly marching on pavement stones
and closing fast around their squares of hate.
I can remember seeing them alone,
at work, and in their tenements at home.
I can remember hearing all they said:
their muttering protests, their whispered oaths,
and all that spells their living in distress.

MARGARET WALKER

STREET SOUNDS

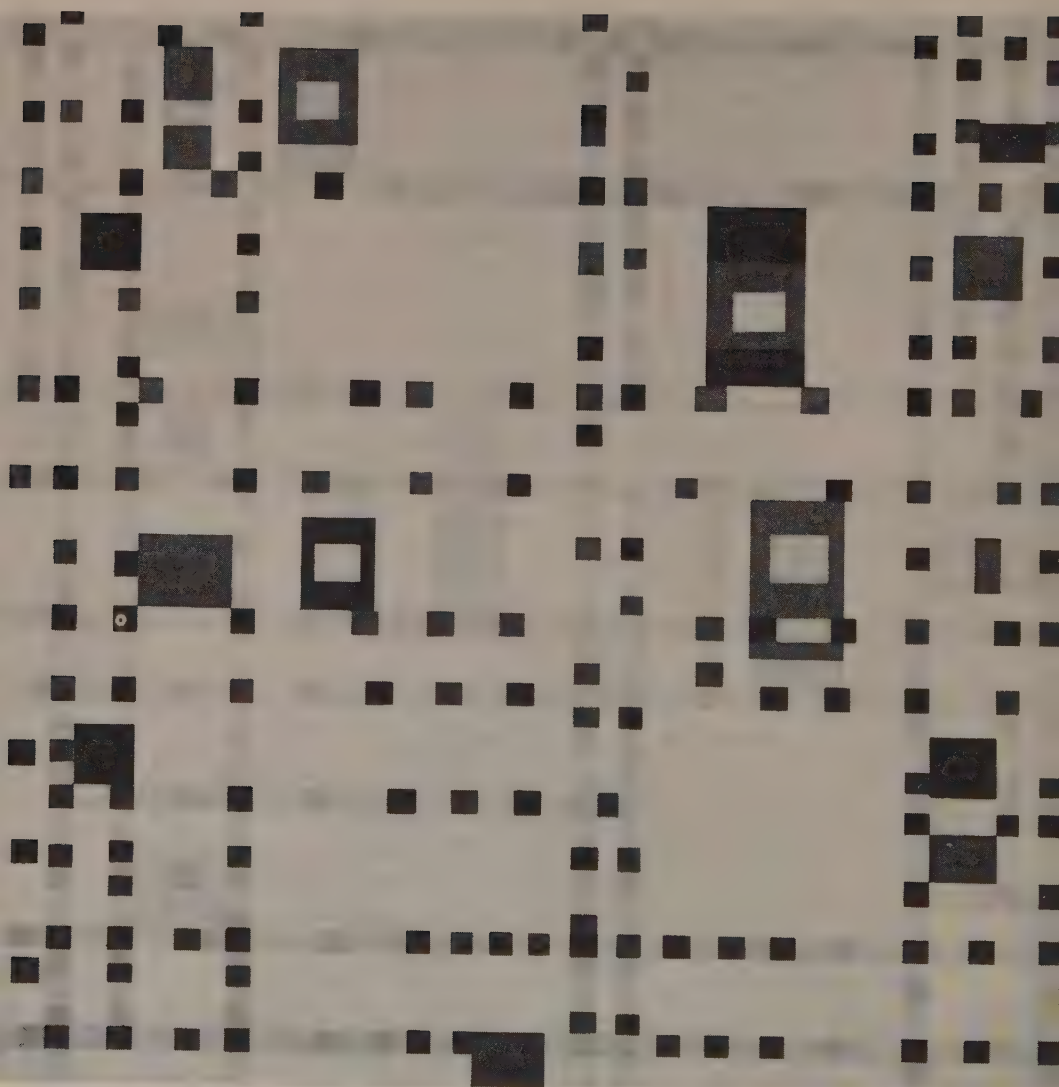
Charcoal cracks in the burner
where Kate and John and Carrie
dream at noon to a music box
that trails a firefly grace,
touching a light to their slender
needs. Wind in the locust
comes reeling on the edge of rain.
I hear the rash horns of fords
noising it up from a block away
where a bride comes soft from church
and billows in her silks, waiting.
Up on the next back porch
a woman slams her back door shut.

JOHN KNOEPFLE

BUILDING BOOM

The avenue of willows leads nowhere:
it begins at the blank wall of a new apartment house
and ends in the middle of a lot for sale:
Papers and cans are thrown about the trees.
The disorder does not touch the flowing branches;
but the trees have become small among the new houses,
and will be cut down—
their beauty cannot save them.

CHARLES REZNIKOFF



DISTANCE AND A CERTAIN LIGHT

Distance
and a certain light
makes anything artistic—
it doesn't matter what.

From an airplane, all
that rigid splatter of the Bronx
becomes organic, logical
as web or beehive. Chunks

of decayed cars in junkyards,
garbage scows (nimble roaches
on the Harlem), herds of stalled
manure-yellow boxes on twisting reaches

of rails, are punched clean and sharp
as ingots in the ignition of the sun.
Rubbish becomes engaging shape—
you only have to get a bead on it,

the right light filling the corridor
of your view—a gob of spit
under a microscope, fastidious
in structure as a crystal. No contortion

without intention, and nothing ugly.
In any random, sprawling, decomposing thing
is the charming string
of its history—and what it will be next.

MAY SWENSON

THREE BLOCKS WEST, ON SUNDAY

It's not what your mother used to do
 on Sundays after the chicken and ice cream,
 staggering down desolate streets.
You're lucky to have your stuffed chicken and
 stomach and chair and that's enough,
 and no knowledge of. You're lucky maybe.
This is not what you see:
Sundays, three blocks west.

Youth with a stick of kindling playing
 baseball with thin boys, crying
 words (which we shall not print here
 or anywhere for that matter) between
condemned tenements
 (but inhabited,
 by people and rats)
 whose doors boarded up
 will make more baseball slats and firewood.
Surprisingly faces look out of missing glass:
black face (of a thin black boy watching thin white boys playing base-
 ball)
 stares from a blank black square,
 white face of woman opens at an upstairs aperture
 its mouth and calls,
and a small fluffy dog scrubbed clean
 (by someone) runs next door into empty cellar space
 beamed over by supports where a burnt-out house had been.
The barbershop has also stars-and-stripes in the showcase
 and last summer's flypaper; it isn't pretty
 but an old man
 stands, looks, and does not move from this display,
talking, talking to no one. This is the end of the city.
 Here people dwindle to no people; railroad tracks
 are last. The boys who wanted to run away

came, and some of them jumped the freights, and some of those
(you know)—

You were well brought up by mothers; what do you see?

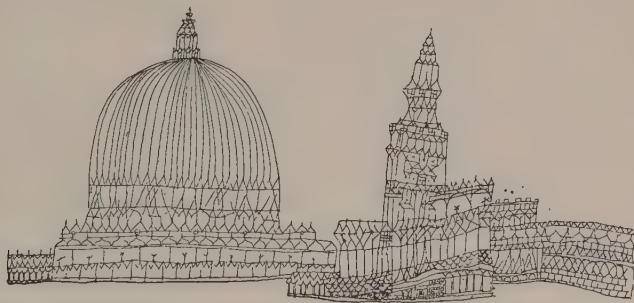
What do you see from the window on peaceful Sundays,
when you rise from newspaper sheets
and stretch (remembering the chicken) and look twenty stories to the
street?

Why, the people look like flies!

Who could imagine it?

It's a wonderful view of the city.

LENORE MARSHALL



RAINY SEASON

It has been raining for three days.

The faces of the giants

on the billboards

still smile,

but the gilt has been washed from the sky:

we see the iron world.

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

GREAT NORTHERN

1

What is it about a GREAT NORTHERN boxcar
standing on a cold siding in West Chicago
that fills me with such nameless joy?

2

Wave, boy, that's the WINNIPEG LIMITED!

3

Inarticulate, lacking paper words,
I celebrate the railroads in my blood.

4

Through the snowfields of central Minnesota
the EMPIRE BUILDER plunges into the night
and I shake by the thundering tracks,
crying hoarsely: love love love.

DAVE ETTER



DIESEL

This downgrade diesel
makes a nervous dark beyond
the pasture.
There were other whistles
I heard as a boy
where the trestle
framed the road at Red Bank Creek,
home-hungry sighs
that made my heart sad.
I could not tell the reason.
The click of the cars is the same:
gondolas sound an old theme,
steady in the late hour.

Those massive locomotives
pulling the heavy strings
lurched under bridges
into utter silence,
then with a whoosh
they clouded the shaken hills.
They were pile driving engines
and they died in my years.
The night is filled with whistles,
like an old freight in New Hampshire
sounding the travail of the race.

JOHN KNOEPFLE



THE PHANTOM OF WOODLAND HOMES

Steamshovel forceps creak,
Budge the entrenched stump—
Its gums smoothed, now the hill smiles
With artificial timber.
But even now some nights
When white TVs in phases gleam
From every sunken livingroom,
The final child bestowed to bed,
There comes a ghost with beaver teeth,
Gobbets of fungus-moss for hair
And hootowl holes instead of eyes,
Who drifts the snipped breezeways, steals
Through parked cars strewing porcupines
In glove compartment and back seat—
At dawn his hawk-clawed prints surround
Petunias stifled in their plots,
The tricycle found tied in knots.

X. J. KENNEDY

ON THE INCLUSION OF MINIATURE DINOSAURS IN BREAKFAST CEREAL BOXES

A post-historic herbivore,
I come to breakfast looking for
A bite. Behind the box of Brex
I find *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

And lo! beyond the Sugar Pops,
An acetate *Triceratops*.
And here! across the Shredded Wheat,
The spoor of *Brontosaurus feet*.

Too unawake to dwell upon
A model of *Iguanodon*,
I hide within the Raisin Bran;
And thus begins the dawn of *Man*.

JOHN UPDIKE



FIREWORKS

Not guns, not thunder, but a flutter of clouded drums
That announce a fiesta: abruptly, fiery needles
Circumscribe on the night boundless chrysanthemums.
Softly, they break apart, they flake away, where
Darkness, on a svelte hiss, swallows them.
Delicate brilliance: a bellflower opens, fades,
In a sprinkle of falling stars.
Night absorbs them
With the sponge of her silence.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

WE'LL ALL BE SPACEMEN BEFORE WE DIE

We'll all be spacemen before we die
flying in purple ships
to the sun
like children
on their first trip
to the sea.

We'll all be spacemen before we die
striding across
blue meadows
the rain
under our feet.

We'll all be spacemen before we die
sleeping
between black velvet sheets
woken
only by the moon

MIKE EVANS

ra ke ta ra ke ta ra ke ta ra ke ta ra ke ta ra ke ta
 sputsputsputsputsputsputsputsputsputsputsputsput
 nik lai nik bel nik strel nik pchel nik mush nik chernush nik zvezdoch
 ka
 spu spu tink spu kak spink spu sobak spu ka kink tak so
 nikka laika kalai kanikka kanaka kana sput
 nikka belka kabel kanikka kanaka kana stup
 nikka strelka kastrel kanikka kanaka kana pust
 nikka pchelka kapchel kanikka kanaka kana psut
 nikka mushka kamush kanikka kanaka kana tusp
 nikka chernushka kachernush kanikka kanaka kana tsup
 nikka zvezdochka kazvezdoch kanikka kanaka kana upst
 barker whitiearrow beespot blackie star
 whitie arrowbarker beebblackie star spot
 arrow barkerbee whitiestar blackie spot
 bee arrowwhitie barkerspot star blackie
 barkbark! whitewhitewhite! blackblackblackblack!
 star! spot! sput! stop! star! sputsput! star! spout! spurt! start!
 starrow ! starrow ! starrow !

[illegible]

EDWIN MORGAN

THE VILLAGE FISH

In the bombed village the dead stack
like cordwood, black bark of flesh.
The old priest looks
at the bodies of sons
and daughters: among them he sees
long corridors
in America, factory cafeterias made of chromium,
huge planes
that fly over cities careful
to drop nothing at all, and machines in kitchens
for grinding meat and vegetables
left-over after dinner, grinding them
into a pulp that oozes into sewers
under the black streets
and out into the ocean for the happy fish
that die in American lakes.

DONALD HALL

MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms grew
Overnight
like they always did
Only this time
there was
nobody
to
pick them

MIKE EVANS



LINES WRITTEN IN TIME OF PEACE

What shall we do with country quiet now?
A motor drones insanely in the blue
Like a bad bird in a dream.

Hush.
The giant plane roars
Gently as a carrier pigeon, soon
Drowned in the distance.

Before the shadows have engrossed the grass
There is a patch of sun to lie upon—
The pale warm thing that summer sheds
When she's ready to be gone.
The peaceful fragrance has not passed
From the fleece that she has worn.
The full bough, the bush, the dreaming vine
Vie with lush greens. To what should grief
Open its eyes again?

One leaf, blood-bright, stains quiet
Like a cry.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

HER MANAGEMENT

She does not place, relate, or name
the objects of her hall,
nor bother to repair her ceiling,
sweep her floor, or paint a wall
symmetrical with mountains.

Cylindrical, her tent
is pitched of ocean on one side
and—rakish accident—
forest on the other;
granular, her rug

of many marbles, or of roots,
or needles, or a bog—
outrageous in its pattern.
The furniture is pine
and oak and birch and beech and elm;

the water couch is fine.
Mottled clouds, and lightning rifts,
leaking stars and whole
gushing moons despoil her roof.
Contemptuous of control,

she lets a furnace burn all day,
she lets the winds be wild.
Broken, rotting, shambled things
lie where they like, are piled
on the same tables with her sweets,

her fruits, and scented stuffs.
Her management is beauty.
Of careless silks and roughs,
rumpled rocks, the straightest rain,
blizzards, roses, crows,

April lambs and graveyards,
she *chances* to compose
a rich and sloven manor.
Her prosperous tapestries
are too effusive in design

for our analyses—
we, who through her textures move,
we specks upon her glass,
who try to place, relate and name
all things within her mass.

MAY SWENSON

WATER

Water, is taught by thirst.
Land—by the Oceans passed.
Transport—by throe—
Peace—by its battles told—
Love, by Memorial Mold—
Birds, by the Snow.

EMILY DICKINSON

MIST

mist
mountain
butterfly

mountain
butterfly
missed

butterfly
meets
mountain

EUGEN GOMRINGER

SNOW

In the gloom of whiteness,
In the great silence of snow,
A child was sighing
And bitterly saying: "Oh,
They have killed a white bird up there on her nest,
The down is fluttering from her breast!"
And still it fell through that dusky brightness
On the child crying for the bird of the snow.

EDWARD THOMAS

A RIDDLE

Where far in forest I am laid,
In a place ringed around by stones,
Look for no melancholy shade,
And have no thoughts of buried bones;
For I am bodiless and bright,
And fill this glade with sudden glow;
The leaves are washed in under-light;
Shade lies upon the boughs like snow.

RICHARD WILBUR

SNOW IS . . .

*snow is english
snow is international
snow is secret
snow is small
snow is literary
snow is translatable
snow is everywhere
snow is ridiculous
snow is difficult
snow is modern
snow is hindering
snow is senseless
snow is musical
snow is gorgeous
snow is sedimentary
snow is meaningless
snow is elemental
snow is fantastic
snow is curved
snow is unauthorized
snow is disgusting
snow is ignorant
snow is irresistible
snow is rare
snow is exhausting*

*snow is civil
snow is smooth
snow is amusing
snow is epidemic
snow is hereditary
snow is risky
snow is analyzable
snow is satisfactory
snow is catholic
snow is tasteless
snow is elegant
snow is absolute
snow is experimental
snow is neurotic
snow is instructive
snow is selfish
snow is unique
snow is prepared
snow is expensive
snow is alphabetical
snow is unsocial
snow is sexless
snow is political
snow is provisional
snow is predominant*

*snow is reasonable
snow is violet
snow is distracting
snow is looking
snow is utopian
snow is evangelic
snow is inevitable
snow is cheap
snow is comprehensible
snow is delicious
snow is relative
snow is norwegian
snow is military
snow is comfortable
snow is light
snow is salutary
snow is harmful
snow is cold
snow is offensive
snow is brute
snow is scientific
snow is irregular
snow is indefensible
snow is independent
snow is annoying
snow is sad*

*snow is enormous
snow is pale
snow is barefooted
snow is corrupt
snow is cordial
snow is converse
snow is libidinous
snow is permitted
snow is sublime
snow is tawdry
snow is imaginable
snow is abstinent
snow is exact
snow is etymological
snow is fragmentary
snow is honorable
snow is immortal
snow is ancient
snow is illustrative
snow is aristotelian
snow is outside
snow is abstract
snow is divine
snow is white
snow is contradictory*

EUGEN GOMRINGER



THE CHILD AT WINTER SUNSET

The child at winter sunset,
Holding her breath in adoration of the peacock's tail
That spread its red—ah, higher and higher—
Wept suddenly. "It's going!"

The great fan folded;
Shortened; and at last no longer fought the cold, the dark.
And she on the lawn, comfortless by her father,
Shivered, shivered. "It's gone!"

"Yes, this time. But wait,
Darling. There will be other nights—some of them even
better."
"Oh, no. It died." He laughed. But she did not.
It was her first glory.

Laid away now in its terrible
Lead coffin, it was the first brightness she had ever
Mourned. "Oh, no, it's dead." And he her father
Mourned too, for more to come.

MARK VAN DOREN

THE SLEEPING GIANT

The whole day long, under the walking sun
That poised an eye on me from its high floor,
Holding my toy beside the clapboard house
I looked for him, the summer I was four.

I was afraid the waking arm would break
From the loose earth and rub against his eyes
A fist of trees, and the whole country tremble
In the exultant labor of his rise;

Then he with giant steps in the small streets
Would stagger, cutting off the sky, to seize
The roofs from house and home because we had
Covered his shape with dirt and planted trees;

And then kneel down and rip with fingernails
A trench to pour the enemy Atlantic
Into our basin, and the water rush,
With the streets full and all the voices frantic.

That was the summer I expected him.
Later the high and watchful sun instead
Walked low behind the house, and school began,
And winter pulled a sheet over his head.

DONALD HALL



POEM, IN SIX PARTS

Indian tribe the Pennacook speared trout in my river

. . .

the river died in the pipes of my city

. . .

the city does not rise into the rain

. . .

it does not rain for trout to breathe

. . .

breathing under dead elms

. . .

my Pennacook hunts for the rise of rivers

DONALD HALL

BLACKBERRY PICKING

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
Sent us out with milk-cans, pea-tins, jam-pots
Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots.
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills

We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered
With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

barn We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.
pail But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush
The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
That all the lovely canfuls smelled of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

SEAMUS HEANEY

ROOT CELLAR

Nothing would sleep in that cellar, dank as a ditch,
Bulbs broke out of boxes hunting for chinks in the dark,
Shoots dangled and drooped,
Lolling obscenely from mildewed crates,
Hung down long yellow evil necks, like tropical snakes.
And what a congress of stinks!—
Roots ripe as old bait,
Pulpy stems, rank, silo-rich,
Leaf-mold, manure, lime, piled against slippery planks.
Nothing would give up life:
Even the dirt kept breathing a small breath.

THEODORE ROETHKE

PRIMROSE

Yellow, yellow, yellow, yellow!

It is not a color.

It is summer!

It is the wind on a willow,
the lap of waves, the shadow
under a bush, a bird, a bluebird.
three herons, a dead hawk
rotting on a pole—

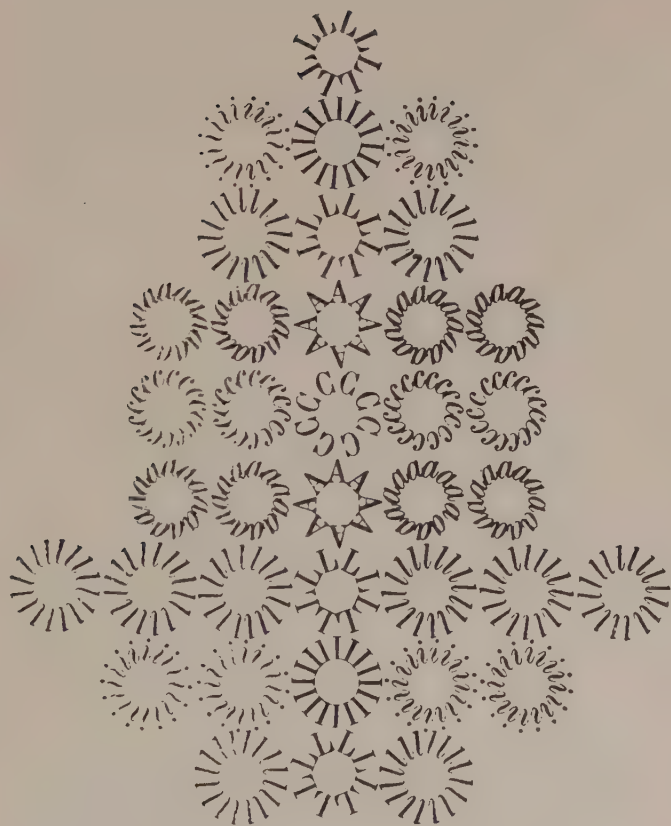
Clear yellow!

It is a piece of blue paper
in the grass or a threecluster of
green walnuts swaying, children
playing croquet or one boy
fishing, a man
swinging his pink fists
as he walks—

It is ladythumb, forget-me-nots
in the ditch, moss under
the flange of the carrail, the
wavy lines in split rock, a
great oaktree—

It is a disinclination to be
five red petals or a rose, it is
a cluster of birdsbreast flowers
on a red stem six feet high,
four open yellow petals
above sepals curled
backward into reverse spikes—
Tufts of purple grass spot the
green meadow and clouds the sky.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS



MARY ELLEN SOLT

ERIN (ELEPHANT)

Elephant who brings death.
Elephant, a spirit in the bush.
With his single hand
He can pull two palm trees to the ground.
If he had two hands
He would tear the heavens like an old rag.
The spirit who eats dog,
The spirit who eats ram,
The spirit who eats
A whole palm fruit with its thorns.
With his four mortal legs
He tramples down the grass.
Wherever he walks,
The grass is forbidden to stand up again.
An elephant is not a load for an old man—
Nor for a young man either.



TRADITIONAL

Translated from the Yoruba [Nigeria] by Ulli Beier

APE

His eyes are mournful, but the long lined palm
He thrusts between the bars expects the best.
His old man's face as innocent as calm,
The beggar puts compassion to the test
And fails. He grips the bars; his pained stare grows
To a brown study framed in dusty fur.
He has a cold. He sneezes, cleans his nose,
Then gravely licks a flexile forefinger.

A pause; the bald mauve hand from which men shrink,
The fingers, strong to clutch, quick to explore,
Again extended, are again refused.
The eyes, poor sorrow's jewels, seldom wink,
But to his grinning public, as before,
Show endless patience, endlessly abused.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

THE SHARKS

Well, then, the last day the sharks appeared.
Dark fins appear, innocent
as if in fair warning. The sea becomes
sinister, are they everywhere?
I tell you, they break six feet of water.
Isn't it the same sea, and won't we
play in it any more?
I like it clear and not
too calm, enough waves
to fly in on. For the first time
I dared to swim out of my depth.
It was sundown when they came, the time
when a sheen of copper stills the sea,
not dark enough for moonlight, clear enough
to see them easily. Dark
the sharp lift of the fins.

DENISE LEVERTOV

FRENCH PERSIAN CATS HAVING A BALL

chat

shah shah

chat

chat *shah* cha HA

shah chat cha HA

shah

chat

cha

cha

HA

chat

chat

chat*shah*chat

chachacha chachacha

*shah*chat*shah*

shah

shah

HA

cha

cha

chatcha

cha

*shah*cha

cha

chatcha

cha

*shah*cha

cha

cha

sh ch

AHA

ch *sh*

EDWIN MORGAN



DRAWING THE CAT

Makes a platform for himself:
forepaws bent under his chest,
slot-eyes shut in a corniced head,
haunches high like a wing chair,
hindlegs parallel, a sled.

As if on water, low afloat
like a wooden duck: a bundle not
apt to be tipped, so symmetrized
on hidden keel of tail he rides
squat, arrested, glazed.

Lying flat, a violin:
hips are splayed, head and chin
sunk on paws, stem straight out
from the arched root
at the clef-curve of the thighs.

Wakes: the head ball rises.
Claws sprawl. Wires
go taut, make a wicket of his spine.
He humps erect, with scimitar yawn
of hooks and needles porcupine.

Sits, solid as a doorstep,
tail-encircled, tip laid on his toes,
ear-tabs stiff, gooseberry eyes
full, unblinking, sourly wise.
In outline: a demijohn with a pewter look.

Swivels, bends a muscled neck:
petal-of-tulip-tongue slicks
the brushpoint of his tail to black,
then smooths each glossy epaulette
with assiduous sponge.

Whistle him into a canter
 into the kitchen: tail hooked aside,
 ears at the ready. Elegant copy
 of carrousel pony—
 eyes bright as money.

MAY SWENSON



CHINESE CAT

pmrkgniaou
 pmrkgniao
 pmrkniao
 pmrniao
 pmriao
 pmiao
 miao
 mao

EDWIN MORGAN

BEES' NEST

busybykeobloodybizzinbees
bloodybusybykeobizzinbees
bizzinbloodybykeobusybees
busybloodybykeobizzinbees
bloodybykeobusybizzinbees
bizzinbykeobloodybusybees
busybykeobizzinbloodybees
bloodybykeobizzinbusybees
bizzinbusybykeobloodybees
busybizzinbykeobloodybees
bloodybizzinbykeobusybees
bizzinbusybloodybykeobees

EDWIN MORGAN

THE ARRIVAL OF THE BEE BOX

I ordered this, this clean wood box
Square as a chair and almost too heavy to lift.
I would say it was the coffin of a midget
Or a square baby
Were there not such a din in it.

The box is locked, it is dangerous.
I have to live with it overnight
And I can't keep away from it.
There are no windows, so I can't see what is in there.
There is only a little grid, no exit.

I put my eye to the grid.
It is dark, dark,
With the swarmy feeling of African hands
Minute and shrunk for export,
Black on black, angrily clambering.

How can I let them out?
It is the noise that appalls me most of all,
The unintelligible syllables.
It is like a Roman mob,
Small, taken one by one, but my god, together!

I lay my ear to furious Latin.
I am not a Caesar.
I have simply ordered a box of maniacs.
They can be sent back.
They can die, I need feed them nothing, I am the owner.

I wonder how hungry they are.
I wonder if they would forget me
If I just undid the locks and stood back and turned into a tree.
There is the laburnum, its blond colonnades,
And the petticoats of the cherry.

They might ignore me immediately
In my moon suit and funeral veil.
I am no source of honey
So why should they turn on me?
Tomorrow I will be sweet God, I will set them free.

The box is only temporary.

SYLVIA PLATH

THE THIRD DAY OF THE WOLF

Lock the gates and man the fences!
The lone Canadian timber wolf
has escaped into the thickets, the ditches, the distances!
Blow the silver whistles!
The zoo-born sniffs the field mist,
the hedgerow leaves, liberty wind
of a cold February Friday.

Saturday trudging, loping, hungry, free but hunted,
dogs tracking, baying, losing scent, shouts dying,
fields dangerous, hills worse, night welcome, but the hunger
now! And Sunday many miles, risking farms, seen panting,
dodging the droning helicopter shadows,
flashing past gardens, wilder, padding along a highway,
twilight, sleepy birdsong, dark safety—till a car
catches the grey thing in its rushing headlights,
throws it to the verge, stunned, ruptured, living, lying,
fangs dimly scrabbling the roots of Hertfordshire.
The haze lifting, the head rising, the legs limping, the run
beginning again, with torches, whispers, smell of men and guns,
far off warning, nearer, receding, wavering, waiting
for a whimper, a twig crack, a blood spot, finding them
and coming on, coming nearer to the starving meeting place.
Breaking cover as had to be, on the icy morning of Monday,
Monday suddenly opening all its mouths, gulping
with fury at the weary fragment, farmers, keepers, police,
two planes diving again and again to drive it
in terror towards the guns, and the farm's pet collie
cornering it at last with the understrapper's yap.
The empty belly and mad yellow eyes
waiting for man were then shot,
not killed, then bludgeoned,
not killed, then shot,
and killed.

How strong man is
with his helicopters and his planes,
his radios and rifles!
What a god for a collie!
O wild things, wild things
take care, beware of him.
Man mends his fences.
Take care, take strength.
Take care of the warrant
for death. How good
he is at that,
with his dirty sack
ready to lay on you:
it is necessary.
But I have a warrant
to lay this too,
a wreath for wildness,
timber wolf, timber wolf.

EDWIN MORGAN

A BLESSING

Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota,
Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass.
And the eyes of those two Indian ponies
Darken with kindness.
They have come gladly out of the willows
To welcome my friend and me.
We step over the barbed wire into the pasture
Where they have been grazing all day, alone.
They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness
That we have come.
They bow shyly as wet swans. They love each other.
There is no loneliness like theirs.
At home once more,
They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness.
I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms,
For she has walked over to me
And nuzzled my left hand.
She is black and white,
Her mane falls wild on her forehead,
And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear
That is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist.
Suddenly I realize
That if I stepped out of my body I would break
Into blossom.

JAMES WRIGHT



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